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**Additional information about your Housing Benefit and**

**Local Council Tax Support claim**

If you need help to complete your online change of address/change in circumstance, please contact the Benefit Department on 01983 823950.

**You must tell us immediately in writing if any of your circumstances change. You must also notify this office of any changes to your household’s circumstances, as and when they occur.**

**You should keep a copy of this page for future reference as it is your responsibility to notify the benefit section of any changes to you or your household**.

**When you make a claim for Housing Benefit and Local Council Tax Support (or both), you agree to a declaration confirming that you will let us know about any change of circumstance for you or anyone living with you that could affect your claim.**

**If your circumstances change, you must tell the council’s Benefit section as it may affect your entitlement. You must report all changes for you and your partner (if you have one) and anyone else living with you, within one calendar month for Housing Benefit and within 21 days of the change for Local Council Tax Support.**

**Penalties of up to £50 for Housing Benefit and £70 for Local Council Tax may be imposed by the authority where changes are notified outside of the relevant timescales given above. To report a change in circumstance you can either contact the council’s benefit department by telephone, email or in writing (see contact details below).**

**Changes you must tell us about:**

*For example:*

• any of your children leave school or leave home

• anyone moves into or out of your home, including lodgers and subtenants

• your income or the income of anyone living with you, including benefits, changes

• your capital or savings change

• you or anyone living with you becomes a student, goes on a Youth Training Scheme, goes into hospital or a nursing home, goes into prison, or changes or leaves a job

• your rent changes

• you move address

• you or your partner are going to be away from home for more than a month

• you or anyone living with you starts work

• you receive any decision from the Home Office

• changes to Tax Credits

• If your Pension Credit/Income Support/Job Seeker Allowance ends

* If you, your partner or non-dependant(s) receive Universal Credit

• anything you have told us about changes, or

• if anyone leaves or comes to live with you

• You get married, form a civil partnership or start living with someone as if you are married or civil partners

• If a child ceases full time education or takes up full time work or child benefit ceases

This is not a full list. If you are not sure, ask us for advice. You must tell the council’s benefit office about any changes in writing or by telephone. If you do not tell us about these changes, you may lose money you are entitled to or you may get too much benefit.

Don’t rely on someone else to pass the message on. It is an offence not to tell us about any change of circumstances that affect your benefit. We may take court action against you and if we pay you too much benefit, you will probably have to pay it back.

**What Happens next?**

Provided all supporting evidence is supplied with your application form and we have no queries, we aim to process your claim within 7 days. If you do not have all the relevant evidence requested in the checklist, please supply the evidence available as soon as possible to avoid a delay in processing your claim. If this information is not supplied within one month of the application, your claim may be suspended or determined as nil entitlement to benefit.

Once your claim is determined you will be sent a notification letter. This will advise you of any entitlement and all the relevant details used in making the decision.

**Mistakes/missing information**

Please remember to check the details on all benefit letters we send you and tell us if there are any mistakes or missing information. This is to avoid any overpayments, which you will have to repay.

**Appeals**

If you want to know more about the decision or if you think it is wrong, you should get in touch with us within **one month** of the date of the decision notice or we may not be able to consider any dispute. You can either ask us for an explanation or ask us to look again at the decision. If we do not change our decision you have the right to appeal.  For Housing Benefit decisions you must appeal in writing to this office.  For Local Council Tax Support appeals these must be made online direct with the Valuation Tribunal at: [www.valuationtribunal.gov.uk](http://www.valuationtribunal.gov.uk/). If the decision is not revised by this office, any appeal would be heard by the relevant independent tribunal.   Further information is available on our web pages.

**Fraud**

If you suspect someone is fraudulently claiming Housing Benefit, please ring the **National Fraud Hotline** on **0800 854 440** or online by visiting[Report benefit fraud - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)](https://www.gov.uk/report-benefit-fraud)

All the information will be treated in the strictest confidence.

**You can apply for free school meals for your child if you receive:**

* Income Support
* income-based Jobseeker’s Allowance
* income-related Employment and Support Allowance
* support under Part VI of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999
* the guaranteed element of Pension Credit
* Child Tax Credit (provided you’re not also entitled to Working Tax Credit and have an annual gross income of no more than £16,190)
* Working Tax Credit run-on - paid for 4 weeks after you stop qualifying for Working Tax Credit
* Universal Credit - if you apply on or after 1 April 2018 your household income must be less than £7,400 a year (after tax and not including any benefits you get)

You can get an application form or discuss with the Directorate for Children and Young People by phoning 01983 823455

If you need to contact the Benefits Section you can contact us on 01983 823950 or email us at housing.benefit@iow.gov.uk.

Report all changes and upload evidence through our customer portal which is quick, simple and easy to use. Please visit: iwight.com.

Or you can attach any information to an email and send it to housing.benefit@iow.gov.uk quoting your benefit claim number in the subject title. Please note there is a maximum size limit of 10MB for email attachments.

Help centres are open for essential pre-booked appointments only. For urgent information, advice and guidance, appointments can be booked by calling 01983 823134 where an advisor will discuss your enquiry and whether it can be resolved by an alternative method.

Customer Service Centre, County Hall, High Street, Newport, PO30 1UD

Opening times 0830–1700 Mon-Thu, 0830-1630 Friday

Ryde Library – 101 George Street, Ryde, PO33 2JE

Opening times 0900-1700 Mon-Tue, 0900-1700 Friday

**This office is closed between 12:15 and 13:30**